

The winter's tale

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The Winter's Tale contains two contrasting worlds, Sicilia, a courtly world and Bohemia, a forest world. For his 2009 production David Farr wanted Bohemia to be a fairytale world and Sicilia to be much more austere. The contrast of the worlds provides challenges in terms of design as well as actor's choices. In this pack, using the rehearsal process there will be opportunities to explore the design of the show, Leonte's jealousy and celebration in Bohemia.

creating the bear: a design challenge

 <p>REHEARSAL NOTES</p>	<p>In David Farr's production whilst the two worlds of Bohemia and Sicilia are contrasting the design uses elements from Sicilia to create Bohemia. The play opens with a Christmas dinner scene in a grand room/library containing large bookshelves. In Bohemia it is paper rather than books that makes up most of the scenery. This exercise on creating a bear enables students to explore the pulling through of scenery from one world to the other.</p>
 <p>ACTIVITY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain, or have set up that the beginning of David Farr's production a table is set up for Christmas including cutlery, crockery, glasses, crackers, paper hats etc. The dinner is held in a grand room with lots of books. Go on to explain that half way through the play the action moves to a forest world called Bohemia. The designer for this production has chosen to use elements of the design for Sicilia in Bohemia. • The biggest challenge for a designer is to create a prop for the stage direction <i>Exit pursued by a bear</i>. • Explain that the student's challenge is to create a bear using the props that were used for the Christmas Table. Ask small groups to come up and create a bear from the materials and find a way for it to move. • If you would rather not do this activity practically you can ask students to design the bear on paper with annotations. This might work well as a collage activity, tearing pictures of the props out of magazines and catalogues. • REFLECTION QUESTIONS: Why would you want to have some of the same objects in two very different worlds? In which other ways might you create a bear?

Exploring leontes' jealousy in act one

 <p>REHEARSAL NOTES</p>	<p>The setting of Sicilia at Christmas time underlines the Winter and storytelling aspects of the play. Furthermore, Leontes' behaviour is made much more significant when it is put in contrast with the celebratory feel of the Christmas scene. In David Farr's production the court come on stage carrying out Christmassy activities, clinking glasses, pulling crackers etc. This activity will help your students explore the first two scenes in Act One using video clips of the RSC actors.</p>
 <p>ACTIVITY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the group to watch the clip of Act 1 Scene one here. You might want to print out the accompanying transcript for the students to look at. • Ask them to reflect on the following questions which the actors thought about in rehearsal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is Hermione doing in this scene? - Is she simply being a good hostess? - Is she trying to make Leontes happy? - How does she view Polixenes? - Is she flirting? If so does she feel immune because she's heavily pregnant? • Ask the group what they think happens next. Ask them in groups of four (Leontes, Hermione, Polixenes and Mamillius) to improvise the next minute of action. You might want to show these or use this exercise as a starting point for discussion on what Leonte's options are. • Once they have explored what they think ask them to watch the clip of Act 1 Scene 2 here • What do they think of Leonte's reaction? You might want to get them to look more closely at <i>Too hot, too hot</i> to explore what Leontes is saying. • Play the video clip again. This time ask the students to move around the classroom as if they were servants at the dinner. What would their reaction be? Might they clear the table? When are the times when they would stand still? Is there a point where they would choose to leave the room? What impact does the idea of having servants in the room have?

Exploring act four scene four: the contrast of bohemia

 <p>REHEARSAL NOTES</p>	<p>Act 4, scene 4 is the sheep shearing feast in Bohemia. In David Farr’s production this scene was meant to contrast directly with the opening Christmas scene, the tables are there to echo the beginning but the atmosphere is more joyous. The scene is complicated including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perdita: a shepherdess, who is really a princess, disguised as a goddess for the feast• Florizel: a prince disguised as Doricles, a shepherd• Autocylus: pretended to be someone who had been robbed when we first met him and now comes to the feast disguised with a false beard (and is the person who stole from the Shepherd’s son)• Polixenes and Camillo are disguised as travelling strangers <p>The key is that everyone in the scene has a secret. In this exercise the students will be given the opportunity to explore this complicated scene up to the point where Polixenes is revealed as Florizel’s Father.</p>
 <p>ACTIVITY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask the students to mill about the room as if they are at a party. Give them the scenario that the party is very formal and they need to interact with each other appropriately. Then ask them to try again, this time the party is very informal and they are very excited to be there. What is the difference?• Explain that the scene they are about to look at takes place at a party.• The director for this production was concerned that the plot might be too complicated so the actors needed to tell the stories as clearly as they could. In this lesson students will create a storyboard for the scene.• Explain that the action points on page 5 will form the basis for their storyboard.• Students can create images for the storyboard and photograph themselves or draw.• Using their copy of the text they need to find a quote for each action point.• REFLECTION QUESTIONS: What is the story within this scene that needs to be most clearly told? What do you think the extra action gives to the scene? What are the similarities between this scene and the beginning of the play? Do you think this is intentional? If so, what do you think Shakespeare is doing with this scene?

Action points in act four scene 4

1. Florizel and Perdita are getting ready for a party —they are both in disguise. Florizel is calling himself Doricles.
2. Perdita is anxious that Florizel's father will find out what they're doing.
3. The Shepherd brings the guests in. These include Polixenes and Camillo in a thick disguise.
4. Florizel proposes to Perdita in front of Polixenes
5. Polixenes tries to find out more about Florizel from the Shepherd.
6. Autocyclus arrives, in disguise as a ballad seller. He sings a trio with two shepherdesses about a secret marriage.
7. Twelve men arrive to perform a fertility dance.
8. The Shepherd starts the marriage ceremony for Florizel and Perdita.
9. Polixenes decides it is time to part Florizel and Perdita and starts asking questions about his father.
10. Polixenes reveals he is Florizel's Father.